

# Hymns and Hymn Books

By Hymnologus\*



While the subject here under discussion is hymnology, yet we do not wish to speak of liturgical hymns, but only of hymns in the vernacular. From a religious as well as from an educational standpoint, this is a more important topic than people are largely inclined to assume. Unfortunately, our churches and chapels do not show up the best of conditions in this respect. Not long ago Rev. L. Bonvin, S.J., felt prompted to write as follows in the *Ecclesiastical Review*: "If we direct our attention to the kind of hymns used by the school children at Low Mass and on other occasions, we find reason for grave concern, especially when we remember how important it is to form good and correct taste in the rising generation." As a matter of fact, it is precisely the congregational hymn, inasmuch as it is most on a level with the intelligence of our children, that exercises a special influence on the training of their taste. If in this respect we let them feed on the fleshpots of Egypt, or even on the husks of the prodigal, we cannot expect them to acquire a relish for the wholesome diet of true church music, especially of Gregorian chant. "But," continues Fr. Bonvin, "do not very many choirs of children still use hymnals that are wretched from a musical as well as an ecclesiastical standpoint, hymnals that offer not only tasteless and insipid texts and musical bunglings, but even adaptations of well-known English, German and French secular songs? Even such decidedly secular tunes as Tyrolese and Swiss Yodels, or such unbecoming music as abbreviated arias from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Rossini's operas are not wanting; all this, too, in a form so corrupt, mutilated and bungled, that in the concert hall or in the family circle we should turn away from it in disgust."

Accordingly, not a few musicians have of late made an effort to oppose the evil by editing new compilations of hymns; perhaps but too many of such books are making their appearance. Have all these editors really the ecclesiastical spirit, the ability, the trained taste, and the patience that are requisite for the successful accomplishment of such a task? Have they, before attempting it, earnestly taken into account the exigencies of a hymnal that would be truly a model in regard to the music as well as the text? Let us at least endeavor to do this here. In this investigation we can hardly choose a better guide than Guido M. Dreves, whose essay, "*Ein Wort zur Gesangbuch-Frage*," thirty years ago, contributed so much to the improvement of hymn books in Germany. For the sake of brevity and to avoid unnecessary bother, we shall occasionally make use of his thoughts without expressly mentioning him.

We shall divide up our article into a general, theoretical section (A), in which we shall examine the requirements of a good hymnal, and a more particular and practical section (B), in which we shall let a number of American hymnals pass in review before us.

## A. HYMNOLOGY:

A hymnal is made up of hymns. Now what are the general properties of a hymn? It must be first of all a lyric, next a lyric for the congregation, and finally a lyric for the church.

### I. A LYRIC

It must be a lyric, that is to say, poetry, good poetry in language and conception. "There should be nothing slovenly in the composition of a hymn, in grammar, rhythm, rhyme, epithets or metaphors. In this respect," says T. E. Bridgett, C.S.S.R., "We have not many

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hymns that are perfect. Hymn writers have been, too easily satisfied and the pious public too uncritical." And, proceeding at once to give some examples of such slovenliness and of prosaic conception and expression, the same author asks: "Why, for instance, did not a sense of the ludicrous cause the author of a certain hymn to revise the following couplet?"

*"Praise Him, fowls and cattle, princes and  
all kings,  
Praise Him, men and maidens, all created  
things."*

From mere carelessness and want of revision cattle and kings are here put in the same category.

The following prosaic lines are due to a poetess who would have cancelled them except from a hymn:

*"I may lose some advantage, and forfeit some  
gain,  
I may meet with unkindness, and suffer some  
pain,  
But Jesus and Mary will surely bestow  
Richer gifts than from sin and apostacy flow."*

Here are poetical (!) strains of a hymn in honor of St. Catherine of Alexandria, issued by an American convent:

*"The wisest doctors of Egypt came  
To prove that Catholic faith was wrong;  
They reasoned for hours, and brought out  
their books,  
For they were all mighty, in wits and tongue.  
O St. Catherine meek! O St. Catherine pure!"*

*St. Catherine stood before them all,  
So humble, she trusted in Heaven alone;  
She proved that the Catholic faith was right,  
Till there they sat, as dumb as a stone.*

*O St. Catherine meek! O St. Catherine pure!*

*Now what did the king and his courtiers do,  
When none of them all could answer a word?  
They said she no longer was fit to live,  
And cut off her innocent head with a sword,  
O St. Catherine meek! O St. Catherine pure!"*

What carelessness and indolence prevails in regard to rhymes? Fr. Bridgett, whom we have already quoted, calls attention to a hymn in which the poet makes the word "Lamb" rhyme in four successive stanzas with *same*, *name*, *came* and *claim*. He refers likewise to another hymn, where in immediate succession, the following would-be rhymes occur: *Come-home*, *seed-head*, *power-restore*, *join-thine*. "Four weak rhymes in succession; where else," he rightly exclaims, "but in a hymn, could such a thing be perpetrated?" Indeed, such feeble half-rhymes occur continually, since recognized poets have set the example. Has not Keble published the following?

*"Like arrows went these lightnings forth,  
Winged with the sinners doom;  
But these, like tongues, o'er all the earth,  
Proclaiming life to come."*

Would it not be desirable that editors of new hymn books should here apply a revising hand, in order that the hymns, sung by our people in honor of God and of the Saints, should also in their external garb not be too inferior to other poems that have a much less lofty purpose?

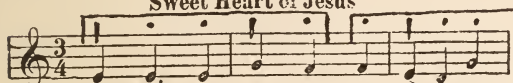
The texts in our hymnals, in conjunction with their tunes, form a new unit, and are intended to be sung; they must therefore be judged from the standpoint of "singableness." Hence, even the most beautiful and noble poem cannot be used as a congregational hymn, if in metrical accents and caesuras, its single verses and stanzas embody differences and irregularities incompatible with a given melody.

1. **Accents.** The substitution, for instance, of a trochee for an iambus, or other metrical irregularities, used by English poets to break the monotony of their verses, easily make a hymn unfit for singing, since the musical rhythm is strictly determined and definitely fixed, so that it cannot be shifted. In reading a poem, many an irregularity or unevenness

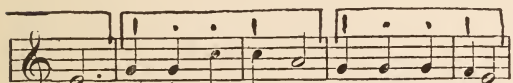
of rhythm can be slurred over and concealed; but in singing it to a well-marked and regularly-built melody, this cannot be done. The rhythm of the music and that of the text being at variance, both the singer and the listener are painfully distressed. This is a fundamental fault and one that is found very frequently in our English hymn-texts.

By way of illustration of what we have just said, let us more closely examine a hymn that is found in several of our hymnals. It is a typical example of how our Catholic hymns disregard agreement between the musical rhythm and the verse-stress.

#### Sweet Heart of Jesus



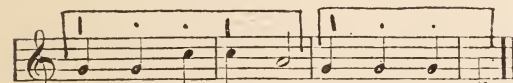
1. Sweet Heart of Je - sus! my God, my
2. My joy, Thy glo - ry; my hope, Thy
3. Let not Thy pre - cious blood be in
4. Help me to lead poor sinners to



1. friend, In life and in death my soul de - fend;
2. name, Sweet Heart of Je - sus, my heart in - flame;
3. vain; Sweet Heart of Je - sus, my will sus - tain:
4. Thee; Fill me with zeal and char - i - ty;



1. In joy, in sor - row, in good and ill,
2. Grant I may nev - er de - sert Thy side;
3. When I am tempted and sore - ly tried,
4. Teach me the ho - ly and sav - ing art



1. Sweet Heart of Je - sus, pro - tect me still.
2. Sweet Heart of Je - sus, be Thou my guide.
3. Make me re - mem - ber Thee cru - ci - fied.
4. Of teach - ing oth - ers to love Thy Heart.

The rhythm of the tune is clearly dactylic in accentuation (!..), while the rhythm of the words is prevailingly iambic (.!) with occasional substitutions and initial inversions. These, however, are quite irregularly placed, and vary considerably in the different stanzas. This feature alone—for the reason given above

—makes the words unsuitable as a hymn-text. Less than half the verses begin, as they here should, with an accented syllable, corresponding to the accented first beat of the measure. The first verse of the third stanza does not observe the musical caesura after the fifth note, as the adjective “precious” must go with the noun it qualifies. The second verse of the fourth stanza ends badly, inasmuch as the music emphasizes and disagreeably prolongs the last syllable of the word “charity.” We would also remark in passing, that in this hymn the address “Sweet Heart” is objectionable, because the music here accentuates the first of the two words, and makes the appellation sound like “sweetheart.”

The hymn writer must, as much as possible, avoid putting the thesis of a foot on unimportant words that should remain unaccented, such as *of*, *at*, *the*, etc. In reading, one can glide over them; but not so in singing; for the music will not only emphasize the metrical accent, but frequently also dwell upon it with a longer note. An example of carelessness in this point is again furnished us by Fr. Faber, and that, too, twice in every stanza of his hymn, “Faith of Our Fathers,” sung to a well-known, but exceedingly trivial tune. If we open the Westminster Hymnal at No. 138, we find that in every case the word “*of*” has a prolonged, accentuated note which is emphasized all the more by the circumstance that it is a higher note after an ascending run. Also in the first and sixth stanzas of the hymn, “Sing, Sing, Ye Angel Bands,” the same poet places the article “*the*” upon the thesis. The music (Westminster Hymnal, No. 105) strongly accentuates the word each time, and this produces anything but a pleasing effect.

2. **Caesuras and Pauses.** Where the music has a break, the text must also permit one. But if such a break in the text created by the music makes nonsense, or renders the words meaningless or ridiculous, the poem in ques-



tion—at least that passage in it—cannot be used with that melody. To speak in technical terms, “Run-on” lines are, as a rule, out of place in a hymn; the verses should all, as far as possible, be “endstopt.” The congregational hymn, as everybody knows, introduces a pause after every musical phrase; and this phrase usually corresponds to the verse; hence, also the text should allow a pause in the same place. A distressing chapter in our hymnology! Here are a few examples by way of illustration:

Does not the break in the music, and the break in the text, necessitated thereby after the first verse, produce a ludicrous effect in the following lines?

*“God of mercy! let us run ||  
Where yon fount of sorrows flows;”*

and equally so in F. W. Faber’s, “O Purest of Creatures,” after the verse.

*“Dark night hath come down on us, Mother,  
and we ||?”*

(See the Westminster Hymnal, No. 106, first and second tunes.) What unnatural and senseless things result throughout from the union of the hymn-text with the first tune there assigned to it! The correct phrasing of the music demands a lesser or greater caesura after every six beats, and this cuts up the text as follows:

*“O purest of creatures, | sweet Mother, sweet  
Maid. ||*

*The one spotless womb where | in Jesus was  
laid. ||*

*Dark night hath come down on | us, Mother.  
and we ||*

*Look out for thy shining, | sweet star of the  
sea. ||*

*Deep night hath come down on || this rough-  
spoken world; . . .*

*And the tempest-tossed Church—all—her eyes  
are on thee . . .*

*He gazed on thy soul, it | was spotless and  
fair: ||*

*For the empire of sin, it | had never been  
there;” etc.*

Some of these absurdities the singer can no doubt avoid, in one case by letting two notes merge into one, in another by disconnecting two slurred notes and assigning one syllable to each; but these are disturbing make-shifts that spoil the melody.

One is disagreeably impressed by the atheistic contradiction brought out by the musical caesura in Faber’s hymn:

*“Jesus is God! there never was ||  
A time when He was not.”*

The ambiguity of the word “lie” (in Westminster Hymnal, No. 81), produces a still more unpleasant effect, on account of the strongly marked musical caesura at the end of the following verse:

*“Thee prostrate I adore, the Deity that lies ||  
Beneath these humble veils,” etc.*

In the same poet’s hymn, “O Jesus, Jesus, Dearest Lord,” the break in the music after the first verse robs the text of its meaning:

*“Jesus, my love, my treasure, who ||  
Can tell what Thou art worth?”*

And similarly (Arundel Hymns, No. 144) in Caswell’s poem:

*“I love Thee, Lord, yet not because ||  
I hope for Heav’n thereby,  
Nor yet since they who love Thee not  
Must burn eternally,” etc.  
“Thou, O my Jesus, thou didst me ||  
Upon the Cross embrace;” etc.*

Such things must absolutely be changed in poems that are intended to be sung. No so-called reverence or regard for the poet should stand in the way, even though our hymnists were greater poets than they actually are, and even if their hymns, when merely read, were veritable masterpieces. Were these poets still alive, and were they made to realize the practical necessity, they would themselves make the desired changes, or put their “placet” on changes already made by others, in order that their texts might really be suitable for singing. Why, for instance, should one not make the above poem

of Caswall fit to be sung, by using this fully satisfying textual revision?

*"I love Thee, Lord, for no reward,  
Not that I Heav'n may gain,  
Nor yet since they who love Thee not  
Must bear eternal pain,"* etc.  
*"Thou on the Cross, O Jesus mine,  
In love, didst me embrace,"* etc.

Here also, the rhymes "gain," "pain," are true rhymes, not merely rhymes for the eye, like those of the original: "thereby," "eternally." Also the irregularity admitted by Caswall in the second last verse (a trochee instead of an iambus) is removed in "Hosanna" in agreement with the musical accent, by putting the word "alone" in place of "solely."

3. In adopting a tune of another nation, and supplying it with English words, one must, of course, choose a text that harmonizes with the music, and that has the same metre and number of syllables as the original poem. But how recklessly do our compilers of hymn books proceed in this regard, how often do they sacrifice the beauty of a tune to a new text of a totally different form! They stretch the music on a Procrustean bed; here they split up a longer note into two shorter ones, there they lop off a member, in another hymn they remove the slurs and assign each note one syllable of the text, or, on the contrary, because the text has not enough syllables, they weave separate notes into a melismatic braid. From all we have thus far said, it follows that the preparation of a good hymn book demands not a little labor and patience; the editor must test each number verse for verse, stanza for stanza, by singing it to the respective tune. In consequence of this test, much, very much will have to be put aside or changed.

## II. A LYRIC FOR THE CONGREGATION +

As Dreves rightly says, a hymn is intended not for single favorites of the Muse; it is written for the whole congregation. In a church

filled with individuals of every age and station, rich and poor, lettered and unlettered, all, as they kneel there, bench on bench and shoulder to shoulder, all should participate in mind, in heart, in feeling. This circumstance alone gives us the necessary corrective, the necessary check that we must apply to subjectivism in a hymn. A true hymn for the whole congregation must avoid everything that one or the other person may perhaps feel or imagine to feel, but what the rest will not feel with him.

The hymns of F. W. Faber, that figure so prominently in English hymn books, for the most part, do not meet the requirements thus rightly laid down for a hymn. Listen to what Cardinal Wiseman writes about them: "Father Faber's compositions (texts) are of so mixed a character that we could almost regret his choice of a title which sets them the more strikingly in contrast with the authorized hymns of the Church. Many of them are evidently **not constructed for use in public worship**, they are the **expressions of an individual**, and even of a **particular mind**, which will find response in many a devout heart, but which could not be introduced into a mixed congregation **without danger of forcing the feeling, in some instances, into an unnatural state**. Some of them represent sentiments of piety and contrition, which on the lips of the casual worshipper would be **unreal**; . . . while **all but a few are more subjective in their character than we should fancy suitable to public worship**, even as outlets of informal and auxiliary devotion."—(*Dublin Review*, Sept., 1894.)

A hymn for the people must carefully guard against all excess of pathos and effeminacy of sentiment, against exaggeration and affectation in the emotions, as well as in their utterance. It must, as T. E. Bridgett remarks, remain within the reach of an ordinary congregation, and therefore contain no far-fetched thoughts, recondite knowledge, or unusual

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words; it must observe sobriety as regards the feelings. And in explanation of these remarks the same writer cites examples from F. W. Faber, and adds brief comments which we here reproduce: "Among all the Church's hymns," he says, "there is nothing in the strain of Faber's:

*"O, Jesus, dearest Lord,  
Forgive me if I say  
For very love Thy sacred name  
A thousand times a day.  
I love Thee so, I know not how  
My transports to control:  
Thy love is like a burning fire  
Within my very soul."*

Surely there must be unreality in a whole congregation singing of uncontrollable transports.

Devotion may doubtless be expected at Christmas, yet it is bold to ask a multitude to sing: "Our hearts are half-broken, dear Jesus, with the joy of this beautiful night."

Christian men and women, children of the Mother of God, may be expected to rejoice in the great prerogative of her Immaculate Conception; it is, however, a different thing to expect them to sing with any truth:

*"O Mother, I could weep for mirth  
Joy fills my heart so fast,  
My soul today is heaven on earth,  
Oh, could the transport last."*

It is incongruous to expect such transport to burst out at once in a whole congregation at the call to open their hymn books at a certain page. Also further on this hymn mounts to a height of emotion, to which even a saint cannot attain every day:

*"O I would rather, Mother dear,  
Thou shouldst be what thou art,  
Than sit where thou dost, O so near  
Unto the Sacred Heart.  
O I would forfeit all for thee  
Rather than thou shouldst miss  
One jewel from thy majesty,  
One glory from thy bliss  
Conceived, conceived immaculate!  
O what a joy for thee!"*

*Conceived, conceived immaculate!  
O greater joy for me!"*

Again, Father Faber, in his hymn for Corpus Christi miscalculated the capacity of others when he wrote:

*"Silence, and let us weep and die  
Of very love, while we adore."*

Such words hardly express the emotions of a processional group.

A good hymn should avoid puzzling paradoxes and strange metaphors. The above exclamation: "O greater joy for me!" is objectionable from the first point of view; a thoughtful singer should not have his mind set puzzling as to whether it is correct, or how it can be true. In Faber's hymn "God" we find the following stanza:

*"O Majesty most beautiful,  
Most Holy Trinity!  
On Mary's throne we climb to get  
A far-off sight of Thee."*

As Bridgett here remarks, the metaphor of climbing on Our Lady's throne is almost comical, and very different from that of climbing to the summit of a mountain for distant prospect, and the thought introduced is bizarre.

Thus far we have considered the hymn chiefly from the standpoint of the text; at least equally as important, however, as the text of the hymn is its music.

As the hymn-text in content and form should be poetry, so also the music of a hymn must be good and have some merit and be of a popular character. But what many of our hymn books have to offer in this respect, Father L. Bonvin has told us at the beginning of our paper; we shall come back upon this in the second part by way of practical examples. For the present let us say only this much, that many hymn books in their music even far surpass the worthlessness, wretchedness, the maudlin and trivial sentimentality and the unchurchly character of their texts.



### III. A HYMN FOR THE CHURCH.

Our hymns should be real church hymns, hence neither secular, nor merely pious lyrics. With reference to this point Dreves writes beautifully and truly: "Works of art, that are destined to come into the most immediate neighborhood of the sanctuary; hymns, that are to be sung during the Eucharistic Sacrifice, must be not only thoroughly sacred, but so worthy and dignified, too, that they fit the dignity and sublimity of the sacred function, resembling and harmonizing with what is strictly liturgical.

"They must not only exclude everything wordly and frivolous, but also embody unction and devotion in no slight degree. As in all the other arts, so also in the art of poetry (and of music), what is destined for God's temple must be sacred, that is to say hallowed, set apart, segregated from profane use; one must at once notice from its outward appearance, that it was made for the church. As we can readily distinguish a church building from every other edifice destined for secular purposes, and a chalice from a beaker or goblet, so also should it be possible to get the impression from a hymn, that it is not a secular song, and that it is something more, too, than a sacred song for concert or home use. Both text and tune of a hymn must absolutely show forth a churchly character, which indeed does not mean that they should be monotonous and dull, but that they should have a certain earnestness and solemnity about them, and should keep aloof in equal measure from boisterousness in joy, from sentimentality in love, from unmanliness and hopeless dejection in sorrow."

Here again a few illustrations: Unsuitable as a hymn, because too familiar, too purely natural, in fact almost sensual, are the following lines in Faber's hymn entitled "The Infant Jesus":

*"When Joseph takes Thee in his arms,  
And smoothes Thy little cheek,  
Thou lookest up into his face,  
So helpless and so meek."*

*Yes, Thou art what Thou seem'st to be,—  
A thing of smiles and tears,"* etc.

Likewise objectionable, on account of its worldly and somewhat showy ballad-style, is the following hymn of Faber, that pictures the three Magi as riding into Bethlehem, much after the fashion of Goethe's *Erl-King*:  
*"Who are these that ride so fast o'er the  
desert's sandy road,  
That have tracked the Red Sea shore and have  
swum the torrents broad?  
Whose camels' bells are tinkling through the  
long and starry night,  
For they ride like men pursued, like the van-  
quished of a flight."*

\* \* \*

Regarding the music, the same is so true of our American hymnals, that James Britten in *The Month*, November, 1915, says of the British collections in regard to their words, namely, that save in few instances sentimental trash disfigures all our books. It is indeed hard to make it clear to a person who from early childhood has grown up amid uneccelesiastical, worldly, and for the most part quite trivial music, what ecclesiastical music is and what, on the contrary, is uneccelesiastical, unsuitable music; for in regard to the emotional value and beauty of music, even in cases where its merits or demerits are quite certain, we cannot prove anything mathematically, least of all to people who have a vitiated taste or to such as perhaps have never earnestly reflected on the mission of music in general, and of church music in particular, people who consider the latter as a thing of secondary importance, or even perhaps a necessary evil. Some features of our hymn books, however, are of such a nature, that they will give even the most indifferent and recalcitrant some food for thought. I refer here to the facts pointed out by Fr. Bonvin in the quotation at the beginning of this article: namely, the use of secular tunes, of Tyrolese yodels, abbreviated operatic arias, etc. Even apart from the fact that it diverts the hearer's im-

agination to worldly scenes and memories, it is impossible for instance that the tune, to which, in Mozart's "Magic Flute," the swarthy slaves of Monostatos, execute their dances and merry pranks, while Papageno plays for them on his bells, that such a tune, I say, should be expressive of anything churchly; and yet both in England and here in America one can hear this tune sung to a sacred text during divine service. Despite all tradition and the reputation of many well-intentioned poets and musicians such and similar music is objectively out of place in church. Nevertheless the use of secular tunes has been defended or excused. An instance is given by J. Britten in his article already quoted: "Father Faber has written to the popular melody known as 'St. Patrick's Day' his hymn 'All praise to St. Patrick.'" "Criticism of this tune," says Dr. Terry (Choir-master, Westminster Cathedral, London) "is disarmed by the fact that Faber wrote his verses for it." "On like grounds," Britten however retorts, "The insertion of other popular tunes might be defended, *e. g.*, 'The Girl I Left Behind Me,' for which, and for others of like character, Faber wrote words."

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Some one may here advance this objection: Some of the best of our old church melodies are borrowed from secular songs, in many cases from love songs, *e. g.*, "the wonderful, unfathomable melody": "O Sacred Head, surrounded by crown of piercing thorn" why, then, should it not be possible to do also in our day what could be done formerly? The answer to this question is given by Dreves and Baemker: Because the melodies of secular songs at that time stood in quite a different relation to hymns than they do today. The people in the Middle Ages formed their melodies after the pattern of the hymns which they heard in church, and in the same ancient church modes in which their hymns were composed. One need but separate the tune from the text in the old popular songs, and then ask himself whether the melodies belonged

to a sacred or to a secular text, and he will find that in many a case he is unable to decide. Concerning the modern popular song and the time since the close of the 17th century one may maintain the very opposite, namely, that the people modelled the melodies of their hymns upon those they heard and sang outside of the Church. But the secular songs had at that time emancipated themselves from the Church and had assumed a specifically worldly character.

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As we are just dealing with objections, let us with Dreves here at once consider another, that is directed against a sound reform of our hymn books. But, after all, the people like these songs, what is offered them in their stead, will not be acceptable. As a matter of fact, the people also like rag-time, our artists have unfortunately but too often, and to the greatest detriment of art, found that just what is worthless and trivial is approved by the masses. Has it not become an almost unailing criterion, that what pleases the people is objectionable from the standpoint of art, while what is truly standard, does not impress them? The popular taste is largely spoiled.

And yet, things are not so bad and hopeless in this respect as they might seem to be, and it would evince a narrow view and lack of courage, were we to give up hope. Do we not often witness in our own day how at popular concerts hundreds of our laboring people listen with evident delight even to the most profound and noble orchestral compositions? In this matter we must proceed according to the principle: Out of sight, out of mind. We need but put something better into the hands of the people, give them time to digest their initial chagrin, and to grow accustomed to the novelty, whereupon a further want will soon cease to make itself felt. But, to take a near view and to speak frankly: In this objection the people are only an advanced post;



the chief opponents of genuine church music are to be found, as experience goes to show, not so much among the plain people, as among the half-educated dabblers in music, and unfortunately in certain quarters, where we should least of all expect opposition to what is truly ecclesiastical. *Sapienti sat.* Here in America, after all, the whole objection falls to the ground of its own accord. For who really sings hymns in our country? Is it the people, the whole congregation? No, with but very few exceptions and apart from a "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name" sung on rare occasions, it is only the children that sing hymns. School children, however, do not raise the above objection; owing to the constant change of attendants at a given school, the little singers soon forget which hymns were sung even a short time ago. In this respect we can do with school children whatever we like. But when we have once formed a good taste among our young people, it will probably be preserved also in their later years.

With the question as to what is ecclesiastical or suitable for use in church, that of adopting melodies and texts used by Protestants or composed by them, is in some way connected. There are compilers of hymn books who rigorously exclude such numbers, even translations of the liturgical hymns of the church, or, for example of the "Salve caput cruentatum (O Sacred Head, etc.)," of St. Bernard, if they have a Protestant source. Does the Church demand this? Not that we know of. How should we look upon the matter? Let us hear Dreves: "Concerning Protestant hymns," he says, "the first and irrevocable rule must be, that pre-Reformation hymns, which, at his defection from the Church, the younger son took with him on his wanderings, must for this reason not be given by us. First of all, we can see no ground whatever for it, and besides, we should thus have to rob ourselves of the very best and

sweetest hymns." In Lutheran churches they use Gregorian melodies; should the Church therefore throw overboard music that is in the fullest sense her very own?

But even against the fact that certain hymn-texts of manifestly Protestant origin are adopted among us there can hardly be a reasonable objection. This toleration does of course not extend to those hymns that are either heretical or have a heretical tinge, nor to those that having originally been rallying hymns or hymns strictly sectarian, are aimed at the old Church. Nor can an objection be raised against this that hymns of special merit, which have long ago been embodied in Catholic collections (and have thus practically become Catholic property), should now remain in the same.

Still more easily, of course, may one be allowed to borrow a tune of "Protestant origin." Witt, the great reformer of church music, as well as other zealous and orthodox church musicians have, for instance, re-edited the Protestant Hans Leo Hasler's beautiful Mass, "Dixit Maria," or warmly recommended the same for performance and, accordingly, this "Protestant" Mass composition is sung by the most ecclesiastical-minded cathedral choirs of Europe at the official divine service; no one has ever protested against it; why then should it not be permissible at an extra-liturgical service to sing a pious melody that is the work of a Protestant composer?

#### B. SOME AMERICAN HYMN BOOKS: +

As the title of this second part indicates, it is only some of our hymn books that we shall here review; they are however all characteristic of either one or the other of the two opposite tendencies, the good or the bad.

##### 1. St. Basil's Hymnal. Compiled from Approved Sources. 12th Edition. Toronto, Canada; St. Michael's College.

Some time ago, when we read in the *London Tablet* a criticism by Dr. Terry of the music

+ *Catholic Choirmaster* - October - 1916.

of the "Armagh Hymnal," we could not help thinking of St. Basil's Hymnal. Here are some of Dr. Terry's words: "The Armagh Hymnal contains music so incredible that, but for a reason which will appear later, I should have declined to review it. I have never approached a task with greater reluctance." "It is difficult to believe that the greater part of the musical setting is intended to be taken seriously, and not as a ghastly joke." "It is a monument of musical illiteracy." "In these severe but necessary criticisms I think I do better service than the inspired critic who—in the November issue of *The Month*—wrote (in a signed article) 'From every point of view—literary, historical, and musical,—the Armagh Hymnal may be commended to the English student of Hymnody.' My sympathies are with the editor of *The Month*. His is not the only journal which has been badly 'let down' in this way."

Unfortunately also in regard to St. Basil's Hymnal many that stand in high places have allowed themselves to be "let down." What our verdict on this hymnal will be is hereby intimated. Yet in condemning this wretched work we are in the best company. Fr. Bonvin's strictures, which we quoted at the very beginning of the first part of this article, manifestly refer to this book; Joseph Otten likewise classes it among hymnals which he calls "miserable excuses for Catholic hymn books," and "trashy collections," corrupting children's taste and rendering it almost impossible to initiate them into music and religious poetry worthy of Almighty God and in accord with Catholic intelligence.

In fact as regards unchurchliness, musical incompetence and depravity of taste, St. Basil's

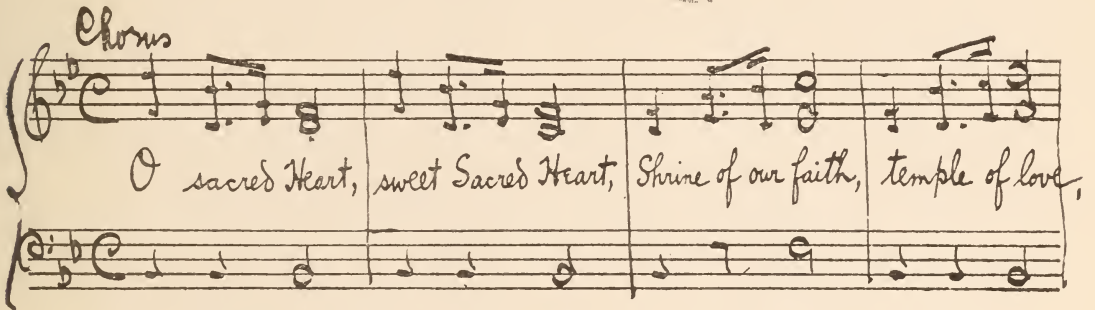
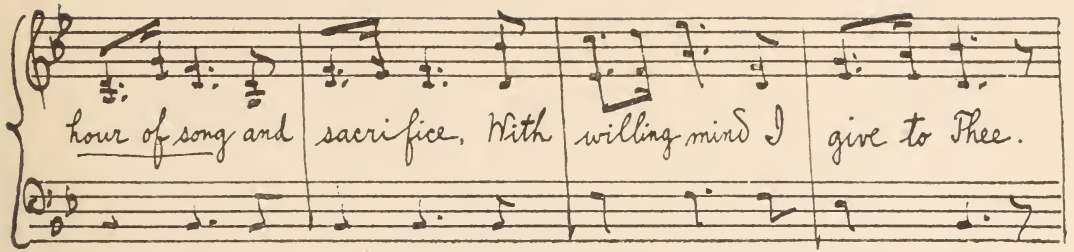
Hymnal is the saddest hymn book we have ever laid eyes on. It offers with few exceptions the most vulgar melodies in nothing but dance and march rhythms, most miserably harmonized and abounding in snatches from the most profane ditties and operettas. Not content with such snatches, it literally takes over entire secular songs, and bungles, curtails or extends them, in order to make them fit its texts.

A few examples: No. 41 is nothing but the Russian folk-song circulating in Germany since about 1843 under the name **Das Dreigespann**; "seht ihr drei Rosse vor dem Wagen und diesen jungen Postillon?" No. 16 is the Styrian Yodler: "Wenn der Schnee von der Alma weggegeth," composed by Hisel in Graz (1820); No. 25 is Prach's well-known song "Das Alphorn." No. 186 presents the entire melody (with the addition of two flourishes) of the Thuringian folk song: "Ach, wie ist's möglich dann, dass ich dich lassen kann," ascribed to Kucken, but composed by Lux in 1827. No. 22 is, note for note, The American popular song-tune: "The Vacant Chair." Nos. 57 and 66 are French secular songs. No. 1 is borrowed from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. The melody is sung in the opera by Edgardo, as he stabs himself at the grave of his lady love. An edifying association of ideas in church!

However much out of place these tunes are in church, they are at least music. But can this honorable designation be given to what is original in St. Basil's Hymnal, so dreadfully barren in ideas and vulgar as it is? Example 1 of our musical appendix will give us an idea of this, while the second example shows how unfit for the organ and how wretched the harmonization largely is.

### Example 1. (St. Bas. H. No. 18.)

1. O Sacred Heart that on the Cross gave up Thy latest breath for me; This



The texts from a literary standpoint are worthy of the music: throughout we find sentimental doggerel, poor in ideas and disjointed in thought; at times quite meaningless. Let us open the book at random, for instance at No. 91:

*"Queen of Heaven, when we are sad,  
Best solace of our pains;  
It tell us, though on earth we toil,  
Our Mother lives and reigns.  
Mary! dearest name of all,  
The holiest and the best,  
The first low word that Jesus lipsped  
Laid on His Mother's breast."*

"It," both in grammar and in sense, is awkward and unclear. And should Our Lady's name really be to us the dearest of all, the holiest and the best? What about the name of her Divine Son? And did Jesus really call

His Mother by name, as the first word that crossed His lips, or did He do so at all in His life? Even we poor mortals have more respect for our mothers. Let us pass on to the next number, 92:

*"Mother dearest, Mother fairest,  
Help of all who call on thee:  
Virgin purest, brightest, rarest,  
Help us, help, we cry to thee:  
Mary, help us, help we pray,  
Help us in all care and sorrow:  
Mary, help us, help we pray."*

\* \* \*

*Help! help!! help!!! and again help!!!!*

No. 93 serves us with:

*"Oh! we pray thee, loved Mary,  
Mary, fondly we entreat."*



And No. 87 with:

*"Let us sleep on thy (Mary's) breast while the  
night taper burns,  
And wake in thy care when the morning  
returns."*

What sentimental, prosaic and unduly familiar language!

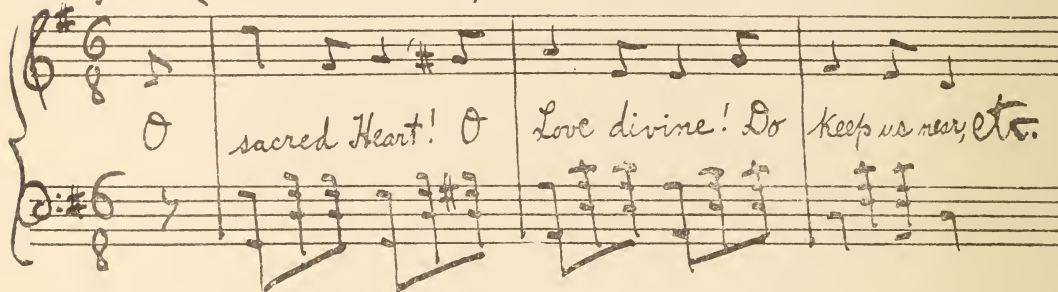
No. 99:

*"Thou has made our desert bloom:  
Mary, deign to hear our prayer;  
If to-night we seek the tomb,  
Shine upon the desert there."*

No. 109:

*"A wanderer here through many a wild,  
Where few their way can see,  
Bloom with thy fragrance on thy child,  
O Mary, remember me."*

Ex. 2. (St. Bas. H. No. 27.)



2. The De La Salle Hymnal. By the Brothers of the Christian Schools. New York. La Salle Bureau. (1913)

The preface of the books says: "The De La Salle Hymnal is offered to the Catholic public in the sincere hope that it may be a valuable aid in religious training. . . . It is of great importance that the impression be good and the emotion noble. This Hymnal aims to secure both results. It has retained what was good in its predecessor, the Catholic Youth's Hymn Book, while studiously avoiding its defects." The frank admission of defects in the former book is gratifying. As a matter of fact it vied with St. Basil's Hymnal in musical wretchedness and scandalous unchurchliness. We willingly concede to the preface that the harmonization has now been

In No. 81, a barcarolle, whose harmonies, in all but one and a half bars, oscillate exclusively between the tonic and the dominant, the poet (!) or poetess (!) petitions:

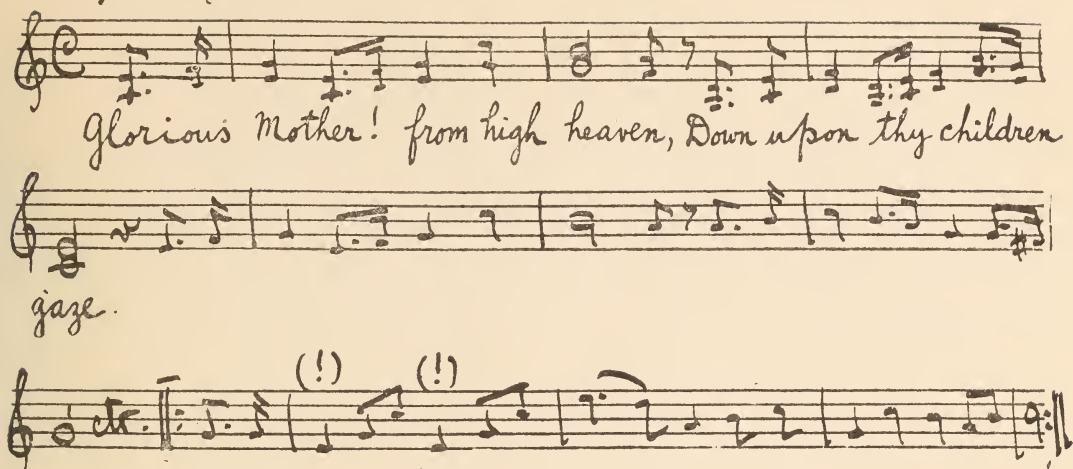
*"Ora pro nobis, the wave must rock our sleep,  
Ora, Mater, ora, star of the deep."*

This petition is quite superfluous; the melody and its harmonization do all the rocking to sleep required.

And such a book that stands beneath all criticism pretends to be "compiled from approved sources," and dares in its preface to speak of a "great end" which the hymnal serves. Unfortunately the wretched compilation, that has had a sale of 600,000 copies, can in its preface maintain with but too much truth it is "patronized and encouraged by the devoted educational communities throughout Canada and the United States."

put on a higher level, that "the organ accompaniment has been adapted to the organ," and that "piano arrangements have been excluded." But much of the bad has been taken over from the former book, and all the good that is new is not of the best; one rather observes even in what is proper from a musical ecclesiastical standpoint, a predilection for what is mediocre and superficial, and, where possible, bordering on the trivial. The musician must emphatically protest against the first portion of the following assertion in the preface, namely that "every tune in the book is either of acknowledged worth as music or has long been associated with Catholic traditions in this country." We should like to see the musician who, for instance, has "acknowledged the worth of No. 64. (See No. 3 of our musical

Ex. 3. (De La Salle H. No. 64.)



appendix.") And there are a number of such pieces in the book. More than one is a medley of fragments from secular songs; this is the case in regard to every section of No. 16. How amusing, or rather how revolting, it is to hear in a "Jesu dulcis memoria" in one passage the strain: "Kann i gleich nit all weil bei dir sein" from the South-German love ditty: "Muss i denn zum Stadtele' naus," and in the following phrase that of "O jerum, jerum, jerum, O quae mutation rerum," from the students' song: "O alte Burschenherrlichkeit!"

Unfortunately the lame excuse that many hymns "have long been associated with Catholic traditions in this country" is applied but too often in this book. These are nothing but objectionable traditions that are in strongest opposition to the Motu Proprio of Pius X., to which the preface dares declare that the hymnal conforms, and are far from effecting the "good impression, noble emotion, and religious training" to which the book pretends to aspire. And why should a new book be published, if the former unworthy music is anyhow to be retained? In that case the old fleshpots of Egypt might continue to appease the ungodly hunger.

The editors assure us that "the editorial file has been applied unsparingly to all the vernacular verses, in order to secure both good English and conformity to the musical rhythm

of the hymns." The musical unfitness of the book taken as a whole relieves us of the trouble of testing the truth of this assertion. All in all we say with Father Bonvin: "Little is gained by re-editing certain hymnals under a different name after the elimination of some numbers and the improvement of the harmonic dress. Such books are beneath all criticism; they simply cannot be improved; they can benefit the cause only by disappearing entirely."

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3. The American Catholic Hymnal; According to the Motu Proprio of His Holiness Pope Pius X; written, arranged and compiled especially for the Catholic Youth of the United States by the Marist Brothers. P. J. Kenedy & Sons, New York. (1913)

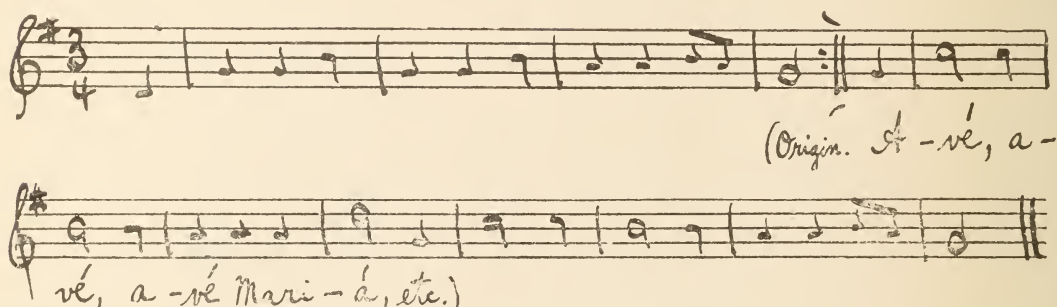
The compilers of this book, according to the preface, look upon it as a "notable work" whose tunes are "remarkable for their religious, prayerful tone." "Old favorite airs of recognized worth are indeed also included," but "many of the hymns are wholly new." Also here the musician will be of a different opinion as to the "recognized worth" of these "old favorite airs." As to the "religious, prayerful tone," the rhythm of popular ditties and waltz and march movements do not indeed celebrate such orgies in this book as for instance in St. Basil's Hymnal; nevertheless,

very many pieces also in this respect have much that is trivial about them, and where the rhythm is worthy and removed from worldly ways, the commonplace and uninspired melody leaves us too indifferent to have any influence upon our religious feelings.

Amateurishness with all the barrenness of idea, a lack of taste usually associated with this term, is the signature of this work. The melodies resemble one another, like one egg does another. The collection claims to be in conformity with the *Motu Proprio*; at any rate, however, it sorely lacks the second qualification set down in that papal document for all church music, namely "true art." Even a simple hymn can and should be true art.

By the way, the insipid Lourdes Pilgrim tune with the wrong Latin accentuation of the last syllables of the refrain: *Ave, ave, ave, Maria,*" is in this hymnal (No. 144) ascribed to Brother M. J. The latter put the words: "All hail, etc.," to the passage in question, and has thus evaded the offensive accentuation. The first part of the hymn is really a paragon of musical simplicity in more than one sense of the term. For the sake of curiosity we reproduce the whole tune in our musical appendix No. 4.

It is a pity that the book should have such a splendid makeup and exemplary binding; wherever one opens the rather large volume it lies flat.



4. Crown Hymnal. By Rev. L. J. Kavanagh and James M. McLaughlin. Ginn & Co., Boston. (1911)

To form a judgment of this book the following features may serve: It contains much from Lambillotte. As meritorious as were the labors of this religious in the field of Gregorian Chant, so much, too, did he work harm by his own compositions, which must be declared models of bad taste and unchurchliness. The Crown Hymnal, furthermore, borrows entire pieces from secular music. A few examples of this: No. 34 (*Graces From My Jesus Flowing*) is literally the *Andante grazioso* of the Sonata in the A major by Mozart. No. 43 is a Russian folk-song that imitates the pealing of bells; and No. 48 is a French song of which we can just now recall only the words of the refrain: "O ma patrie, o mon pays."

In other numbers we are reminded now of this, now of that secular piece; thus in the unspeakably trivial melody of No. 37 (*My Jesus, Lord, My God, My All*) the middle part is identical with the passage: "So viel Vögelin als da fliegen," from the German song, "So viel Stern' am Himmel stehen." This passage, after all, though not churchly, is anyhow the only musically respectable turn in the whole piece. The miserable hymn is found in all our bad hymnals and is much sung. How can a good, not to say an ecclesiastical taste, thus thrive among our young people?

The musical poverty of some numbers is really distressing. We need but consider the trivial No. 15 (see our musical appendix, Ex. 5) with its manifold repercussions of the same tone tripping along in an *allegro* movement five distinct times. One cannot help thinking



of the comic students' song: "Was kommt dort von der Hoh, 'was kommt dort von der ledernen Hoh?'"

The much-heard hymn No. 7 ("Hear Thy Children, Gentle Jesus") with its tasteless leaps and bounds in the last four measures should at length disappear from our hymnals. It is the tune of the German hymn: "Schonstes Kindlein, bestes Knablein," which originated in a religiously shallow age. Would that we could condemn to Orcus also hymn No. 87 ("Daughter of a Mighty Father," composed probably by Lambillotte) with its ridiculous accentuation of the word *macula* on the last syllable, repeated five times in the short Latin refrain: "Macula non est in te."

The Crown Hymnal, too, contains (as No. 108) the Lourdes Pilgrim Tune, which we have already spoken of; it keeps the original Latin text of the refrain; yet to avoid the ludicrous accentuation of the French hymn, it omits the first up-beat, changes that of the second musical phrase to a feminine ending appended to the first phrase, inserts a new note in the sixth bar and thus entirely destroys the original rhythm and the agreement with the other sections of the piece.

The book contains very little good music of a specifically ecclesiastical character (abstracting, of course, as in the case of the other hymnals, from Gregorian melodies). Despite all this, it too does not fail, in the very first sentence of the preface to refer to the *Motu Proprio*.

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5. *Psallite*. Catholic English Hymns collected by Alexander Roesler, S. J. 5th Edition. B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo.

This book would deserve an extended discussion; the circumstances, however, that it developed into Bonvin's *Hosanna* makes such a discussion superfluous. In fact, *Hosanna*, which first appeared as the sixth edition of *Psallite*, took over almost the whole musical contents of Roesler's book. Though *Psallite*

has been indeed far surpassed by its successor in value and excellence, especially in regard to the texts, yet it was, before the appearance of the latter, the best English hymn book as far as the music was concerned, and as to its texts at least not worse than most of the rest.

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6. *Hosanna*. Catholic Hymn Book with an Appendix of Prayers and Devotions. By Ludwig Bonvin, S.J. Op. 97. Fourth Edition fully revised and augmented. B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo. (1914)

Also in the case of this book we shall consult the preface. In its place we find the verdict of the censor of the book appointed by the Bishop of Buffalo. It gives us pleasure to say that the use of the hymnal for several years has convinced us of the entire correctness of this verdict, and that the praise bestowed by him upon the book is applicable in a still higher degree to the fourth edition now before us, which contains quite a number of excellent new texts. We herewith submit to the reader the censor's verdict: "Regarding the musical quality of the pieces," he says, "I may note that here we have a choice selection of the most beautiful hymns that have been used by the Catholic Church since the twelfth century, and which really breathe the true Catholic spirit. None of the pieces is to be classed among the trashy or unchurchly sort of music." In fact, we meet here (as No. 50) Hasler's tune, "O Sacred Head Surrounded," already referred to in the first part of this article. Dreves calls it a "wonderful melody of unfathomable depth." He characterizes also other tunes contained in *Hosanna*; thus he calls the twelfth-century tune of No. 55 ("Christ the Lord Has Risen") "perhaps the most powerful of all hymns," "that from the shoulders and upward towers over all." "Maiden Most Beautiful" (No. 107), "which exhibits the venerable old form of strophe, antistrophe, and epode," is considered by him as a "most symmetrically constructed tune,

first swelling more and more mightily and then subsiding with more and more charm." The tune of No. 8 ("Make Broad the Path") can be traced back to no older source than a hymn book of the seventeenth century, yet it bears the most unmistakable marks not only of a greater but of a very great age. Dreves says of it: "This hymn has always made upon me the impression of stirring, heaven-assailing power. The subjective mood is, as in all Advent hymns, that of expectation, but here it is not, as would seem usual, a quiet, painful longing and expectation, but a holy impatience, a pious impetuosity, that would do violence even to heaven. These emotions are expressed in a well-nigh matchless way by the strong Doric mode in which the melody strides along." Of the hymn, "A Great and Mighty Wonder" (No. 20), probably a fourteenth-century product, he writes: "The melody is a real folk-tune." The changing rhythm, by which with each third verse the hymn passes over into 4-4th time, has an agreeably surprising and enlivening effect." No. 137 "Hail, Mary, Star of Morning") has a beautiful text with a mediaeval flavor; its tune, according to Dreves, is "a fragrant blossom, a tender and yet not at all effeminate melody that would deserve to live everywhere on the lips and in the heart of the people"; the tune can be traced back to the seventeenth century. The melody of No. 11 ("A Child Is Born in Bethlehem"), which can also be found in the hymn books of the seventeenth century, he calls a "hymn of heavenly sweetness." To these gems of sacred song especially characterized by Dreves we could link many others, as, for example, Nos. 15, 17, 26, 47, 48, 62, 79, 80, 92, 106, 129, 133, 134, 136, 149, 141, 142, to enter upon which would here require too much space.

We have examined all the texts as to their contents and their singableness, and can endorse the opinion of the censor deputatus in this regard when he writes: 1. "The **wording** of text embodies sound Catholic thought and sentiment expressed in true hymn color. All

sentimentality, verbiage and meaningless ringing of phrases has been carefully debarred. 2. The language, as such, is not only correct and idiomatic, but many of the pieces will, on close examination, be found to be genuinely poetical; not one of the numbers lacks the quality of worthiness or sinks below the level of mediocrity. 3. An important feature of the book is this, that the texts are really adapted to the melody and rhythm, with the accents, pauses and caesuras placed naturally and properly, and this holds true of all stanzas. In all these respects (1, 2, 3) it will be readily acknowledged that Fr. Bonvin's work is . . . a great improvement. . . . The entire work is the result of most painstaking labor and rare taste. . . . The purpose of the author has evidently been to incorporate the best of the best, and I do not hesitate to say that he has succeeded."

To the above we would add by the remark that despite all the care spent upon the book and rightly pointed out by the censor, the author has, nevertheless, not succeeded to effect everywhere full agreement between the caesuras of the music and of the text. These cases are, however, very rare and hardly disturbing. Still less, owing to the well-known carelessness of our hymn writers of the past in this respect, could he avoid every musical accentuation of small unimportant words that should remain unemphasized, like "of," "at," etc. Among the texts which, according to the censor, at least do not "sink below the level of mediocrity," we should count a few hymns to the Blessed Virgin that almost confine themselves to a series of invocations from the Litany of Loretto. For singing they may, however, serve as well as more coherent texts.

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7. **The Parish Hymnal.** Compiled and arranged by Joseph Otten. B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo. (1915)

This hymnal also deserves to be recommended from an ecclesiastical standpoint. In the preface we read: "It has been the aim to

offer such hymns only as are worthy, both in text and melody, of the high purpose for which they are destined." As a matter of fact, a close examination of all the numbers has shown us that there is not a single unchurchly tune in the book. A good many are beautiful and valuable, *e. g.*, Nos. 10, 18, 22, 31, 36, 51, 68, 71, 74, 85; yet we miss some of the very finest tunes of our hymn repertory. According to the preface, the compiler wishes knowingly to incorporate "no texts (not even translations, no matter how excellent) or tunes of non-Catholic origin." By thus needlessly making the exclusion of every non-Catholic product his inexorable principle he has robbed himself of many texts that would rhythmically have been much better adapted to his tunes, and also of many a precious melodic gem; *e. g.*, the "O Sacred Head Surrounded," by the old Protestant composer, Hans Leo Hasler, a melody that has been incorporated into many of the best Catholic hymnals of different countries. (See what we have quoted from Dreves on this question in the first part of this paper.) The preface assures us that "care has been exercised in the selection of the English texts." This care might have been greater in regard to the agreement of the accents and caesuras of the text with those of the music chosen, and, furthermore, in regard to the number of syllables required by the notes of the melody; in some numbers the melody is curtailed owing to an insufficient number of syllables (*e. g.*, in Nos. 10, 23, 73), or burdened with new notes where there was a surplus of syllables in a verse (*e. g.*, in Nos. 23, 87). This in most cases implies an impairing of the melody.

In order to make compilers of hymnals practically realize the importance of closely examining whether a given text can really be fitted to a given melody, as well as the frequent need of a text revision, we shall enter upon a few of the examples that struck us in this book:

In Nos. 3 and 4 ("O Come, O Come, Em-

manuel") the music has a caesura after the first verse; hence the word "free" seems to be joined to "Jesse," while the sense requires that it should be drawn to the following verse; for the same reason the refrain, when sung, gives a wrong sense, for instead of *Israel*, Emmanuel is called upon to rejoice: "Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel." (The same is true of the Latin text of No. 5.) In No. 4 this blemish is removed by rearranging the words, but the music wrongly accents the word "rejoice," namely, on the first syllable.

The charmingly naive melody of No. 10 was robbed of a number of its beauties; some phrases of the original ("In dulci jubilo") begin on the up-beat, others on the down-beat, and this agreeably interrupts the rhythmic monotony; the Parish Hymnal does away with the up-beat throughout, on account of the consistently trochaic text; on the other hand, in the 11th and 19th measures (also on account of the text, which here has one syllable too many), it converts the dotted half-note into a half and a quarter note, which here makes the melody somewhat frisky. In the 27th and 28th measures the original text has only one syllable, and hence slurs the two notes, thus producing a charming portamento from the tonic to the dominant; the Parish Hymnal in three stanzas sacrifices this slurring on account of a surplus of syllables in its texts. In the third stanza at the 15th measure the metrical accent strongly emphasizes the article "the," which should receive no stress, and in the 20th measure the musical caesura wrongly draws the auxiliary "are" to the preceding part of the sentence. The text used in No. 22 is partly involved, and therefore hard to understand. "Grief divine" in the first stanza (like "purity divine" in No. 87) is, when referred to the Blessed Virgin, dogmatically objectionable. The wish: "Let me to my latest breath in my body bear the death of that dying Son of thine," expects rather much of ordinary Christians. The two eighth notes that appear five times in No. 23 are not



to be found in the original of Isaak ("Innsbruck, ich muss dich lassen"), they impair the melody, especially in connection with the two quarter notes instead of the half note of the original at the first two beats of the 2., 4., 8., and 10., measures. Redundant syllables of the text are again accountable for this addition of a note in the last-named four measures; while, on the contrary, the last verse, which has not enough syllables for the corresponding passage of the original, occasions a mutilation of the melody. At the end of the fourth verse of the first stanza the music has a caesura, which, indeed, is rightly indicated in the Parish Hymnal by a line drawn through the staff; this caesura, however, brings about a want of sense in the text: "good Lord, that I." It is a pity for the heartfelt and beautiful melody of Isaak! (See in Hosanna, No. 92, the customary form of this tune.) The text in No. 26 receives through the music a number of false accentuations: "Conqueror, victory', beautiful, untenante'd, joyously', glorified." The same happens in No. 35, and that, too, in a very noticeable way: "Comforter," "weakness of our flesh." Nos. 73, 76, 81 and 82 accentuate "scatter, violence, altar, ingrate, groaning, and patiently." In Nos. 69 and 100, on account of the musical caesura, we are supposed to sing: "I suffer still in love," instead of "still in love I ever true will be," and, likewise: "furnace till."

Owing to the great extent this article has already reached, we cannot any more carry out our plan of discussing in detail every hymn.

8. Rev. Alfred Young's "Catholic Hymnal," a book whose author undertook the bold and gigantic task, scarcely possible of accomplishment, of successfully composing all alone 237 popular hymns.

Also in regard to the following hymn books for two voices we must content ourselves

simply with mentioning them approvingly and briefly characterizing them:

9. "Cantemus Domino." Catholic Hymnal with English and Latin Words for two and three equal voices. Edited by Ludwig Bonvin, S.J. Op. 104. B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo. 1912.

10. "Cantate," a Collection of English and Latin Hymns, etc., Compiled by John Singenberger. F. Pustet & Co., N. Y. 1912.

The latter collection, with its natural and harmonious settings for two voices and on account of the preference it gives to tunes that have a rhythmically regular structure, is especially intended to be used by parochial school children in church, while the "Cantemus Domino," by a very tasteful selection of melodies, choice features in harmonization and conduct of parts, and by incorporating some hymns of a larger and more artistic structure, does not, indeed, exclude the performers just mentioned, but has principally convent and institutional choirs in view.

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## ST. BASIL'S HYMNAL

A Review of the New Edition Compiled by the Basilian Fathers

A consideration of the new edition of the well-known hymnal would not be complete without reference to the original St. Basil's Hymnal, concerning which there has been considerable discussion in Catholic circles for many years. To those who may not be in a position to know it may be well to explain that the original edition (and each successive edition up to the one under consideration at this time) has been severely criticised by individuals and by organizations like the Society of St. Gregory for the chief reason that it contains melodies taken from secular and operatic sources, and because, from a musical and literary point of view, it was probably the poorest and most wretched specimen of the entire collection of miserable hymnals with

which the Catholic Church has been afflicted for many generations.

Mr. Joseph Otten, writing on this subject in *America* some time ago, declared that the publication of St. Basil's Hymnal and hymnals of like calibre was a misfortune, and they should never have been permitted to circulate. He asserted that they were mere "miserable excuses for Catholic hymn books, corrupting children's taste and rendering it almost impossible to initiate them into music and religious poetry worthy of Almighty God and in accord with Catholic intelligence." Other critics, in the persons of Rev. Fr. Habets, O.M.I., and Dom Lucien David, secretary to Dom Pothier (in the *Revue du Chant Gregorian* Grenoble), have expressed surprise at the fact that such books were accepted as Catholic hymnals. James P. Dunn, another writer in *America*, vouchsafed the opinion that St. Basil's was out of date and unmusicianlike in arrangement.

In a comprehensive article on "Hymns and Hymn Books" in a recent number of the *Choir-master* a prominent authority, assuming the pen name of "Hymnologist," after quoting Dr. Terry's famous criticism of the Armagh Hymnal, to the effect that this hymnal "was a monument to musical illiteracy," and that it was "difficult to believe that the greater part of the musical setting was intended to be taken seriously and not as a ghastly joke," stated that, "unfortunately, also, in regard to St. Basil's Hymnal, many that stand in high places have allowed themselves to be 'let lown' in recommending the book and giving it their approbation." This writer, going into detail, continued:

"In fact, as regards unchurchliness, musical incompetence and depravity of taste, St. Basil's Hymnal is the saddest hymn book we have ever laid eyes on. It offers, with few exceptions, the most vulgar melodies in nothing but dance and march rhythms, most miserably harmonized and abounding in snatches from the most profane ditties and operettas. Not content

with such snatches, it literally takes over entire songs, and bungles, curtails or extends them in order to make them fit its texts. A few samples: No. 41 is nothing but the Russian folk-song circulating in Germany since about 1843 under the name "DAS DREIGESPANN": Seht ihr drej Rosse vor dem Wagen and diesen jungen Postillon? No. 16 is the Styrian Yodler: "WEN DER SCHNEE VON DER ALMA WEGGAGETH," composed by Hisel in Graz (1820); No. 25 is Proch's well-known song, "DAS ALPHORN." No. 186 presents the entire melody (with addition of two flourishes) of the Thuringian folk-song: "Ach, wie ist's möglich dann, das ich dich lassen kann," ascribed to Kucken, but composed by Lux in 1827. No. 22 is, note for note, the American popular song-tune, "THE VACANT CHAIR." Nos. 67 and 66 are French secular songs. No. 1 is borrowed from Donizetti's "LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR." The melody is sung in the opera by Edgardo as he stabs himself at the grave of his lady love. An edifying association of ideas in church!

However much out of place these tunes are in church, they are at least music. But can the honorable designation be given to what is original in St. Basil's Hymnal, so dreadfully barren in ideas and vulgar as it is? The texts, from a literary standpoint, are worthy of the music; throughout we find sentimental doggerel, poor in ideas and disjointed in thought: at times quite meaningless. In No. 81 a barcarolle, whose harmonies, in all but one and a half bars, oscillate exclusively between the tonic and dominant, the poet (!) or poetess (!) petitions:

**"Ora pro nobis, the wave must rock our sleep, Ora Mater, ora, star of the deep."**

This petition is quite superfluous; the melodies and its harmonization do all the rocking to sleep required.

And such a book that stands beneath all criticisms pretends to be compiled from approved sources and dares in its preface to speak of a great end which the hymnal serves. Unfortunately, the wretched compilation, that has a sale of 600,000 copies, can in its preface maintain with but too much truth it is patronized and encouraged by the devoted educational communities throughout Canada and the United States."

This lengthy quotation is quite in order, for it is pertinent to inquire, in view of the statement of the publishers, that the new edition has been entirely revised and completely remodeled how sincere is the conversion, and in what particular manner does this book vary from the original edition?

#### THE "REVISED" ST. BASIL HYMNAL

For a reply to this let us examine carefully the new edition, and let us begin from the very first page:

Omitting a hymn to St. Basil (without number), and proceeding with the first numbered hymn, we find our melodic friend (quoted by "Hymnologist") from the opera "Lucia di Lammermoor"! This melody, badly garbled and hiding under a churchly disguise of changed tempo and rhythm, is the melody which is used in the opera as a vehicle for these words, sung by Edgardo before stabbing himself:

*"Thou hast spread thy wings to heaven  
Oh thou spirit pure and tender, etc., etc.  
Bereft of thee I will not live  
Look and forgive, Tho' by mortals doomed to sever  
Love cannot perish: Reft of thee I cannot live,"  
etc., etc.*

This melody, so widely known, serves in this new edition as a melodic support for the text, "God of My Heart." See example No. 1.

No. 2 in the new edition gives the Protestant hymn tune, "Nearer, My God, to Thee." (We are considering a Catholic hymnal.)

No. 3, "Holy God," contains the same old error in the text found in so many hymnals; viz., "Everlasting is thy name" (instead of reign), and "Angel choirs are singing" (instead of raising).

No. 6 is an "Adapted melody from Haydn."

No. 10 sounds suspiciously like an old southern negro melody, "Sal, am de pot a-boilin'!"

No. 11 is undoubtedly derived from our famous "Home, Sweet Home." Here is the original tune and the adapted one used for the text, "Jesus, Jesus, Dearest Lord!" (See No. 11 in appendix.)



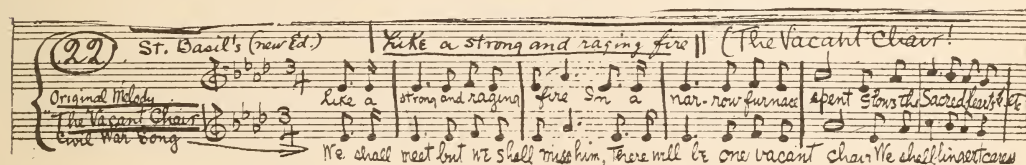
No. 17 is another "adapted melody from Haydn," demonstrating the poverty of our resources.

No. 18 is a splendid example of dance music, being written in mazurka rhythm, with a chorus that (in the first measure) is taken bodily from the Thuringian folk-song, "How Can I Leave Thee!"

No. 21 is seemingly the one-time favorite parlor ballad, "Too Late! Too Late!" (referring to the Ten Foolish Virgins). It has in this setting a changed melody in spots, but the rhythm and outline clearly determine its

origin. It here masquerades as a Sacred Heart Song, "Pity, My God!"

No. 22 is known to every one as the melody of "The Vacant Chair," a famous war song. It will be noted that no acknowledgment is made of the original sources of these melodies, and in this manner a species of humbug is practiced, for many of our priests and sisters do not know that they are singing melodies originally associated with texts which by no stretch of imagination could be called devotional. (See No. 22 in appendix.)



No. 25 is the famous "Alpenhorn" song, by Proch, quoted by "Hymnologus." Again no mention is made of the fact that this was one of the popular ballads of the day, and that the original text contains reference such as, "for the bliss I am in search of, I can find alone with thee!" Why was this considered particularly suitable for a frame upon which to attach the text:

*"Peace, be still! Our God is dwelling  
Silent on his Altar throne?"*

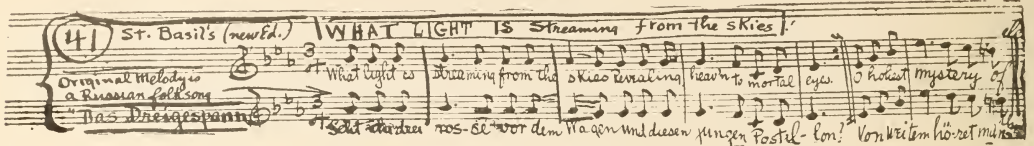
No. 29, "Form Your Ranks, Oh, All We Leaguers! is credited to one Zardione. If Mr. Zardione is to be judged as a composer of hymns by this specimen of "hymn tune," the palm for writing the best brass band melody in the entire collection must be awarded to him. It is a pity that the original accompaniment (as given in the earlier editions) was not retained. The attempt to refine the blare and the "Um-pah-pah" of the horns as indicated in the original setting is futile, for the melody cries out aloud for its trombone accompaniment and must needs perish at the forced separation. The editor will have something

to answer for if he should ever meet Mr. Zardione, for a composer is usually jealous of his artistic children and cannot bear to see them truncated or disjointed, or even forcibly refined. A vulgar tune is vulgar, no matter in what tempo it appears, and this tune savors of the cheap burlesque, notwithstanding its new dress and its "Andante" tempo indication.

Nos. 37 to 39 (with the exception of Nos. 31 and 38) are all specimens of that type of sentimental melody which is dear to the hearts of the Billy Sunday congregations. They are not hymns, but melodies taken from secular sources; they are either piano pieces or mushy melodies found in vocal methods (Concone et al.). These melodies are gushy, oversentimental or inanely cheap in character, and are to be found only in Catholic Hymnals of this type and in the Moody and Sankey and Billy Sunday Revival Hymnals. (Billy Sunday's masterpiece, it will be remembered, was a hymn concerning "De brewer's big horses—but dem big horses can't run over me!") With all our wealth of traditional melodies of unquestionable Catholic origin we here demonstrate that we are rapidly heading our congre-

gations towards an acceptance of "De Brewery Hosses" type of hymn.

No. 40 is a melody clearly taken from the German sources. Many will recognize the genuine "Allemand" type and may be able to trace its original title. It is here serving as a melody for the words "In this Sacrament, Sweet Jesus!"



No. 51, "Thou For Whom I've Long Been Sighing," is set to a melody which sounds very much like the old Civil War songs of the style of "Just Before the Battle, Mother." It is not a religious melody, at any rate.

No. 52 is a typical "Salvation Army" tune, and we can readily imagine a street crowd singing it for dear life with the usual accompaniment of tambourine and cornet.

No. 56 is another tune of this type; it has all the elements of popularity, the conventional swing and the cheap march rhythm; all it needs to place it in its proper category is

In No. 41 we again meet an old melodic friend, "Das Dreigespann," an old Russian folk-song dressed up in Catholic clothes to fit the text, "What light is streaming from the skies?" Here is the melody with its adapted text and the German version. (See No. 41 in appendix.)

the accompaniment which exists in the original edition, but which was censored in this edition (as if the accompaniment could possibly change a bad tune into good hymn).

In No. 58 we find the compilers have gone to English sources to obtain the melody of a fine old folk-song "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton." Only a little mental effort was required to adjust the words "O Purest of Creatures" to to the music and thus the Catholic imprint was given and the art product was complete. Here is the original text coupled with the interpolated verses. (See No. 58 in appendix.)



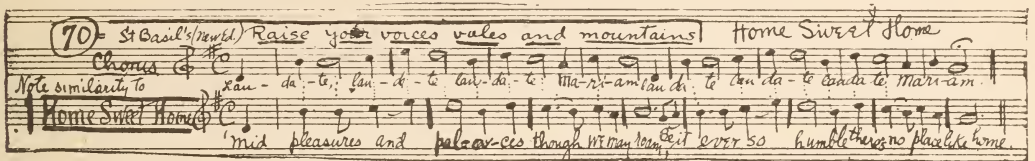
The fact that a great many persons would know the original melody and would retain their first impression of its connection with "Sweet Afton" despite the effort to connect the melody with "O Purest of Creatures" seems to have been overlooked by the editors. Why should we offer Our Lady second choice or second-hand melodies? Is she not worthy of something better than a musical work conceived originally as an accompaniment to verses written in honor of a river?

No. 61 is one of the best known of our Catholic hurdy-gurdy tunes. The indication "Andante" dotted quarter note 50) is caviar to the majority of players. The rhythm of the piece determines its tempo notwithstanding the tempo indication. In this case the composition is of the hurdy-gurdy type and will surely be played in hurdy-gurdy fashion. This and like sickly-sentimental tunes which here follow in steady procession, are to be found only in Catholic hymnals and in the books put forth

by the Moody-Sankey and Billy Sunday type of Evangelists.

No. 70, "Raise Your Voices Vales and Mountains" is another melody borrowed from our

ever popular "Home, Sweet Home." The Chorus, as will be seen from the appended example is a direct reproduction of the famous home song with but a changed accent. (See example 70.)



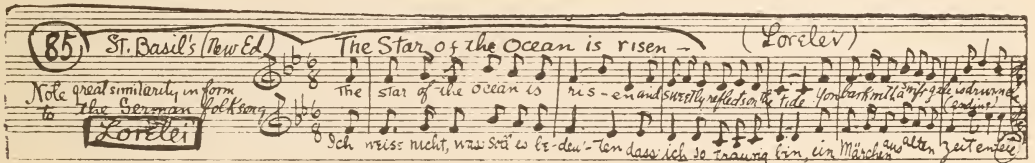
No. 72 is a weak imitation of one of Wallace's melodies (from Maritana if memory does not play false), set to the text "How Pure, How Frail."

No. 78, "Unfold Ye Golden Gates of Heaven" is set to a melody by one of the editors. The Chorus of this march (for it is certainly not a hymn or devotional tune) sets the feet a-going and one can readily picture the boys following the brass band keeping time and imitating the sound of the trumpets.

The familiar barcarolle-like "Ave Sanctissima" No. 80, has been retained even in the line "The wave must rock our sleep Ora Mater," etc.

Fr. Lambilotte is responsible for No. 83 and has much to answer for. Many of our wishy-washy and mucilaginous hymn tunes are from the pen of this worthy priest who utilizes the musical idiom of the "Offenbachian" period and as a result, we have a decadent type of church music which has been handed down to us as a relic of the golden era of French Opera Bouffe.

No. 85 is here given as a hymn to Our Lady with the title of "The Star of the Ocean Is Risen." In its original form the melody is recognized as the "Lorei" a familiar folk-song of Germany. (See example 85.)



No. 92 gives us the famous "Help! Help! Help!" song quoted by Hymnologist. No charge of involved or modern harmonic treatment in the accompaniment to this melody can be brought with any degree of justice against the composer, for we have just three chords in the entire piece; tonic, subdominant and dominant. In fact this element of simplicity was one of the chief attractions of the original "St. Basil's" and we are glad to note that not too great a strain has been placed on the mental equipment of our organists in this new edition. Some of the piano accompaniments and caden-

zas and barber-shop chords have been changed, it is true, but admirers of the St. Basil type of hymns need have no fear that all the attractive features of the original have been supercensored or eliminated.

Musicians, looking at these melodies taken from such well known secular sources would likely gather that the music of our non-liturgical functions must indeed have fallen to a low estate if such abominations in the form of hymns were accepted as a typical Catholic art product.



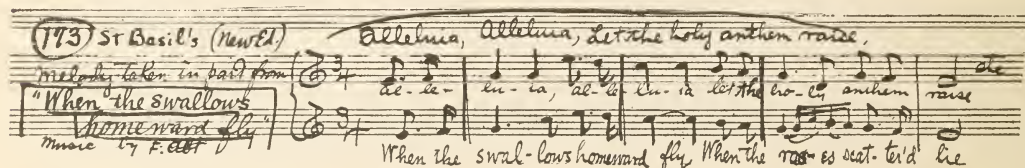
However, let us examine a few more hymns in the English and then turn our attention to the Latin section. Here is a model dance tune with variations posing as a hymn to the Blessed Virgin (No. 115).

The chorus of this ribald tune (in mazurka rhythm again) is probably the best illustration of the type of hymn which may please certain elements among our Catholic people; let us hope that a newer generation will have been trained to detect the difference between a dance tune and a genuinely devotional melody. Lambilotte's famous "Notre Dame" hymn is found with all its frills and rococo twists at No. 118, while, next door to it we see Gottschalk's favorite piano piece "The Last Hope" serving as a basis for the hymn "Mary, Unto Thee I Call."

No. 122 given as a hymn to the Blessed Virgin, is the typical hunting song to the words: "The Sun Is Shining Brightly." At 123 we find the same incorrect version of the traditional "Stabat Mater" melody which disfigures so many hymnals. No. 130 is a hymn to St. Joseph, an old familiar tune newly accoutred by J. Brazil. Italian opera choruses all end in one

manner, at least in the old Italian operas we could always anticipate the ending of the piece because of the recurrent tonic and dominant phrases. The ending to this operatic St. Joseph hymn is worthy of its Italian progenitors, but it is really amazing to think that in the year of our Lord, 1919, musicians and publishers would dare to issue such a conventional hack horse in the form of music of this type, and have the courage to label it **church music**. No. 147 is an old French "Bergerette" originally a song by Pergolese allied to a love text. In this book we find it masquerading under the title of a hymn to Our Lady. "Like the Dawning of the Morning." It would be instructive to say the least, to put the original text and Father Faber's in parallel columns. No. 153 has for a refrain, an exact reproduction of the school game melody, "London Bridge Is Falling Down."

No. 165 gives us another text to the Pergolese melody originally conceived as a love song (Bergerette). No. 173, "Alleluia! Allelui!" is nothing more than the celebrated "When the Swallows Homeward Fly" by Franz Abt. Here we can see both the original and the interpolated text. (See No. 173 in the appendix.)



No. 177, "Haec Dies"—a discarded setting by Bordese. Since the Motu Proprio was issued this type of composition has been almost eliminated. Was the insertion of this number intended as an appeal to those who may not have read the dictum of Pope Pius X on the subject of modern church music?

No. 178 appears with the incorrect raised leading tone, which destroys the modal character of the composition entirely. In the remaining English hymns there are many equally bad examples as those quoted. We shall have to devote a little space to the Latin Section,

however and will proceed to an examination of the Chant. The use of quarter notes may be permissible, but the adoption of such a notation, in the opinion of the reviewer, destroys the value of a certain contrast which is achieved by the use of eighth and quarter notes. The mora vocis, for instance, can best be illustrated in modern notation by the use of quarter note ending in accordance with the system advocated by the Solesmes monks themselves.

Apart from this consideration however, we find on examining No. 254 closely that the text has been incorrectly apportioned to the notes

(Pange Lingua) at the words *mysterium--ventris* and *effudit*, while the "Amen" melody does not accord with the Vatican edition. Does not Rome require that any reproduction of the chant should conform to the typical Vatican edition?

No. 256 is a Gregorian Chant (*Parce Domine*), in measured rhythm and in modern form—another distortion—and such a useless procedure.

No. 257 gives a new syllabization for the word *Sa-cra-tis-si-mum*; on one note at the end of first line the two syllables *si-mum* are run together in quite a comical fashion.

Hybrid Psalm Tones are utilized at Nos. 259 and 260 for the *Miserere* and *Benedictus* respectively. Why not give the correct psalm tones according to the *Antiphonale Romanum*?

At. No. 262 we note a garbled version of the great "Veni Creator" melody. What justification can there be at this time, so many years after the advent of a typical Vatican edition of Chant, to use such mutilated versions of the Chants? Probably the most ludicrous example of a distorted musical setting is the amalgamation of text and music at No. 265. In Chant the principles advocated by the Solesmes Monks with regard to the ictus and its relation to the tonic accent work out beautifully. In modern music, the attempt to put the same principles into operation results disastrously as can be

noted by this particular "Ave Maria Stella." Imagine children yelling out on unaccented syllables in this fashion according to the rhythm of the melody, in 6-8 time. a-VÉ, ma-RÍs, stel-La-de-í ma-TÉR al-MA at-QÚE sem-PÉR vir-GÓ, fe-LíX coe-LI por-TA.

Every stanza sung according to the music here given will give the above one-legged effect.

At. No. 267 appears a mutilated Gregorian melody (*Iste Confessor*)—also at 258.

In the Litany of the Blessed Virgin (No. 270) we note the omission of the *REGINA PACIS, ORA PRO NOBIS*, ordered to be inserted by His Holiness some years ago. The Psalm, "Deus in Adjutorium," has an incorrect Psalm tone assigned to it. (P. 275.)

Pursuing our examination further we note on page 278 a setting of an *O Salutaris* to the melody sung generally in non-Catholic churches to the words of "Old Hundred," but the climax of the entire work is reached at No. 274 (*Tantum Ergo*.)

We are here asked to subscribe through the singing of the German song (notwithstanding its Austrian origin), to the sentiments "Germany! Germany! above all!!" in the tune allotted to the "Tantum Ergo" on page 280. Here is the original setting by Haydn and the distorted version adopted for the Latin text. (See Appendix No. 274.)

(274) (St. Basil's Hymn) *Tantum Ergo* = Haydn  
 Revised Edition

*Tantum Ergo Sacramentum Ve nere mun cer nu i*  
*Et anti-quum documen tum Novo ce-dat ri-tu-i. Prae-stet Fides sup-ple-men-tum*  
*Sen-su um de-fe-ctu-i. amen*

The original melody is known as the Austrian National Hymn but is better known as the German Hymn, *Deutschland! über alles*  
*Deutschland, Deutsch-land über al-les, über alles in der Welt*  
*Germany, Germany, over all the world!! etc*

If we object very seriously to confusing our religious feelings with the national aspirations of militaristic empires, we have the option of rendering homage to another departed ruler, the Czar of a Russia that is no more. The melody allotted to the text of the second

Tantum Ergo brings vividly to mind the era of anarchy and terror in the country whose national song we here adopt as a vehicle of praise to our Lord in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar? What an association! (See Appendix No. 274b.)

274(d) St. Basil's (New Ed.)  
Melody assigned in St. Basil's  
Original melody ~~assigned in St. Basil's~~  
The Russian National Hymn

Tantum Ergo  
Russian Tune

Sod save our noble czar! Long may he live in power in happiness in

cer-mu-  
peace To reign. Bread of his enemies Tally sure de fender. God say the Gzar God say the Gzar

Verily, anything will do for use in the Catholic Church according to the evidence here brought to view. Publishers are proceeding on the theory that no one knows the difference and no one cares!! And they may be justified in this assumption judging from the support they have received at the hands of those in authority.

Hybrid Psalm Tones fill the remainder of the book and in the Requiem Mass (Gregorian) there occur any number of errors in the co-ordination of text to music. A Dumont Mass is included while Mr. Brazil contributes a Mass in four parts written in the old time conventional form. "Et unam Sanctum" is given instead of 'Sanctam' in the 'Credo' while in the Agnus Dei (the very last page of the book) there are two glaring errors in the text. This is the text according to the Brazil version.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, (miserere nobis omitted.)

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere!! miserere nobis.

Dona nobis pacem dona nobis pacem, dona nobis pacem, pacem.

The Missal and the Graduale Romanum give this authentic reading:

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi; miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi; miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi; dona nobis pacem.

Rome announced some years ago, that all publications giving versions of Gregorian Chant should agree strictly with the original Vatican Edition. We find in this book nothing but a mass of distortions and perversions of the Chant. The impression has been created by the publishers that the new edition was strictly in accordance with the wishes of the Holy See (although no specific mention is made of the fact in the preface). The distortions of both text and music occur in the Pange Lingua (254), the Veni Creator (262), the Litany of the Saints (272) (with its incorrect "Agnus Dei") and in the Psalm tone, Deus in adiutorium. The Vespers of the Sunday are given and a subtitle informs us that the setting is taken from the "Antiphonarium Romanum." The setting is not in accordance with the Antiphonarium issued by the Vatican press which we are supposed to follow. The Chant "Ave Regina" (299) is also badly garbled. The setting of the Regina Coeli, by Labet (No. 300), is the best example of Sacred dance music that could possibly be imagined. This composition



(if we can so dignify it) reflects the true character of the hymnal as a whole, and we can base our impression of the musical value of the entire work upon this typical *piece de resistance* with its tripping measures and musical comedy atmosphere.

The publishers have emphasized the fact that certain objectionable features found in the earlier editions have been omitted in this new edition. Does the elimination of the pianistic accompaniments, the omission of the cadenzas and the florid roulades warrant the retention of the prime offenders—the *melodies*? These melodies exhale the breath of a former period—the decadent period of church music. It was exactly this type of music that the late Pope Pius of happy memory, referred to, when he asked or rather commanded that the music of the church conform to the laws of true art. It is this kind of music that offends our sense of the fitness of things. “Sacred music”—quotes a well-known authority,—“should conform to the law of prayer.”

“The law of prayer must be the law of song, both that our prayer may be good art and our art good prayer.”

To return to our first question “In what manner does this book differ from the original edition?” The answer can only be that the “revised” St. Basil’s Hymnal is still the same St. Basil’s notwithstanding the new investiture and excellent printing, and the strictures pronounced upon it by “Hymnologist”—apply just as well to the new edition as they did to the original work. M. COLAS.

#### COMMUNICATIONS +

St. Basil’s Hymnal.

A communication from the compilers and the reply of the reviewer.

To the Editor of the *Catholic Choirmaster*:

Dear Sir:

A contribution to your April number on the revised St. Basil’s Hymnal resembled an attack rather than a review or criticism.

The reviewer, M. Colas, we have no doubt, is actuated by the very best motives nor do we contend that the book in question is free from all the defects to which he draws attention. But in his commendable zeal for the reform of church music, he seems to suggest a method of procedure which certainly will never bring that reform about. The reviewer evidently cannot understand that the editors of the St. Basil Hymnal share his zeal and are equally intent upon bringing the music used in churches everywhere up to the desired standard. Such a result, they claim, must be reached by a method altogether different from that of immediately expurgating every publication of anything and everything which does not square with the canons of strictest orthodoxy.

There is a public to be considered, and there are the multifarious conditions or rather disadvantages, under which large proportions of that public are constituted.

Already publishers in high repute and with every facility for reaching musical world have brought out hymnals fully satisfying the strictest requirements, only to discover that there were no means available of getting such hymns into common use. Whatever good is done the cause of promoting sacred music by circulating books some of whose numbers fall below the standards of purity, none whatever is accomplished by hymn books condemned to lie and grow musty on the shelves of a book store or in a publisher’s storeroom. Whether the united force of municipal, state and federal administrations will ever succeed in reforming the population by compelling compliance to absolute prohibition of liquor, certainly we have no power to compel Catholics in every part of the land to immediately abandon the use of traditional hymn melodies. What may be found more or less feasible in a Cathedral choir or in a school situated in some large center, becomes a totally different problem in the thousands of small and scattered con-

+ *Catholic Choirmaster* - October - 1919.

gregations, whose interests we must, nevertheless, not cease to consider.

Nowhere else in the Catholic world did the *Motu Proprio* of Pius X find a large community better prepared for its acceptance than in the province of Quebec. No other clergy, as a whole, are more devoted to the study of church music; nowhere else are such large proportions of the faithful of every class trained to the use of plain chant from early youth. Nevertheless, as M. Colas must realize, their hymnals for many years to come are likely to contain music of the character he finds so reprehensible. The airs their grandparents, and great-grandparents for generations have loved and sung cannot easily be set aside.

Having devoted a great deal of space to exposing the defects of the original *St. Basil's Hymnal*—a book which has been discarded and is no longer in print—and having emphasized rather vigorously the oversight which allowed “name” to be substituted for “reign” and such typographical errors as “tuum” for “Tuam,” etc., etc. (defects we can certainly promise to remedy), the prevailing charge levelled by M. Colas against the revised edition is because of the resemblance certain melodies bear to secular airs. In case of some of these we must confess having never detected the resemblance, nor having heard of any one who did; in the case of others we frankly acknowledge the fact. What M. Colas failed to note, however, is that a very large proportion of the members in the original work, which were objectionable on this ground have not appeared in the Revised edition. Critics will also understand, we trust, that we agreed to the retention of a certain number of such melodies for a time, not because they resemble secular airs, but because they are traditional melodies.

Now we wish to assure the Society of *St. Gregory* that we have given the practical side of this question a very serious study. We have a plan which has been carefully

thought out and it aims a hymnal which in every way will come up to their standard, but also at gradually bringing our patrons to the use of music of that character exclusively. This, we realize, will require some time. We cannot hope to accomplish in one issue what others with greater opportunities have tried and failed in. But anything short of this would be no service worth while to the cause we are trying to serve. Were our task merely that of issuing a hymnal in full accord with the spirit of the *Motu Proprio* it could easily have been finished long ago. We do feel assured of accomplishing the greater task through successive reprints and ask consideration for and observation of our efforts.

Meanwhile we shall always be grateful to M. Colas and others equally competent for suggestions that may be of assistance.

Respectfully yours,

THE EDITORS OF THE REVISED  
ST. BASIL'S HYMNAL.

Toronto, Can., Oct., 1919.

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#### THE REVIEWER'S REPLY

To the Editor of the *Catholic Choirmaster*,

Dear Sir:—

I have carefully perused the reply of the editors of the revised edition of *St. Basil's Hymnal* to the comment made by your reviewer in the April issue of the *Catholic Choirmaster*. First of all, permit me to assure the compilers of the hymnal that the matters of good faith or good intentions were not called into question, for the writer criticised the volume entirely upon its merits and upon the character of its contents. The compilers may have been actuated by the very highest motives in issuing a book for Catholic Church use which contains secular and operatic melodies and a transcription of the Gregorian Chant which is contrary to the edition issued by the Vatican. Motives do not enter into the question, but results do. The principal results

of the use of such a hymnal as has been put forth by the Basilian Fathers are these: Our children will obtain a perverted notion of devotional music and they will be asked to sing to devotional texts such melodies as "**Lucia di Lammermoor**," "**Home Sweet Home**," "**The Vacant Chair**," the Russian folk-song, "**Das Dreigespann**," "**Das Alpenhorn**"—a sentimental ballad of by-gone days; brass band melodies and the style of melody dear to the heart of "**Billy Sunday**," of which the "**Brewer's Big Horses**" is a model type. Other secular melodies we are asked to perpetuate through the use of this hymnal are melodies (utterly undevotional) such as "**Flow Gently, Sweet Afton**," and Father Lambillotte's operabouffe melody (as found at No. 83), a dance tune (as at No. 115), and another foot-tickling melody as given at No. 118.

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Surely the personal element has no reason for entering into this question of criticism when we are confronted with such examples of decadent and vulgar music as found at Nos. 122, 123, 147, 153, 165 (a French "**Bergerette**"), 173, 177, and numerous other examples of the same type. The compilers of the new edition of St. Basil's have chosen to lay stress on the fact that some (very few) hymns which were originally ribald Italian street songs and which contaminated the taste of our Catholics for generations because they were incorporated in the older editions of St. Basil's Hymnal under the guise of "**sacred songs**" have been eliminated from the new edition. The old edition of St. Basil's Hymnal was a standing reflection on the ordinary intelligence of our Catholic people. The new edition is a replica of the old in that it contains all the old favorites (made **traditional** through the use of St. Basil's Hymnal and others of a like type), and the only change perceptible is in the accompaniments. The Gregorian Chant section is a parody of the legitimate melodies as given in the Vatican Edition and in this connection, the statement

made by a learned Doctor of the Church who wrote in protest to the distributors, may be of interest to those who view this question from its educational aspect and who can gauge the effect of the continued use of secular banal hymn tunes upon the taste of the children of the present and succeeding generations. The writer of the appended letter protests against the distribution of a book containing matter not in conformity with the official books issued by the Vatican and in support of his argument quotes from the "**Motu Proprio**" as follows:

"Even a small degree of familiarity with the liturgical hymns of the Church will show how averse the Church is to all semblance of what, for want of a better word, I shall call "**jingle**." Note how she strives to obviate this "**jingle**" by distributing groups of notes here and there even in the most simple, the most syllabic hymn chants. Now any musician will acknowledge that by its very nature rhythm in 6-8 time most readily sinks to the level of the aforesaid "**jingle**." With this in mind kindly glance rapidly over the pages of St. Basil's! "**No—'sacred music,' says the Motu Proprio, 'must be holy . . . it must be true art.'**"

"I am asked to accept the statement made by the publishers that the musical editor of St. Basil's is a 'student of Plain Chant, which he makes a specialty.' I take it for granted therefore that he is likewise familiar with the laws of the Church regulating the Liturgical Chant, at least in as far as this is necessary for editing the Sunday Vespers and the Requiem Mass, both of which are incorporated in St. Basil's. In reply to this, may I submit you the following?

"St. Basil's (revised) has an 'Imprimatur' dated 1918, which is presumably also approximately the date of publication. Now the first Sunday Vespers which is given our children to learn is one that has **been officially abrogated since January 1, 1913.** (The 'Preface' tells the public that these Vespers are '**accord-**



ing to the Antiphonarium,' presumably, of course, the one in actual Catholic use.) In these same Vespers (of 1918) there are Gregorian Melodies that have been **officially superseded** by the appearance of the Vatican Antiphonale of 1912." "As for the 'Vespers according to St. Basil's Hymnal,' they are a direct violation of the Motu Proprio, for there are no antiphons whereas the Motu Proprio says explicitly: 'It is not lawful to confuse this order (the order given in the liturgical books) or to change the prescribed texts for others selected at will or to omit them.' Furthermore, the Gregorian melodies of this Vespers came under a prohibition that dates back as far as 1904.

"The Mass for the dead,' says the Preface, 'is taken from the Vatican edition of the Graduale and is set out in its **complete form**.' "I begin with the first syllable. According to the Vat. Edit., there must be two 'f's' (or the equivalent) over this syllable. At the syllable 'ter' of the second word the 'pressus' has been neglected. At the word 'Domine' the notes have been re-distributed over the syllables—an express violation of the rules laid down for reproducing the official melodies of the Church. The same thing is done at the word 'perpetua,' etc., etc., etc." "All through the Mass, except Tract and Offert., there is a lack of anything that might show how long Gregorian groups are to be subdivided—a matter of such extreme importance to a decent singing of the Chant. Where is the Gradual of this complete Mass? In what part of the Vatican Graduale is the setting of the Dominus Vobiscum (as given on p. 317) to be found?

"I refrain from more fault-finding. Let someone else continue the task!"

"In conclusion I am asked to admit that St. Basil's 'is at least the most popular (hymnal) on the market.' On the other hand, I beg to ask whether in the light of the facts above enumerated, it is right for a Catholic Priest to adopt in this matter the popular phrase, 'Everybody's doing it,' as his guiding

principle? An ordinary good Catholic layman would resent the imputation that he had followed that course of action in a matter of far less importance than in Sacred Music destined for the House of God."

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The reviewer, in closing, begs to refer to the statement made by the compilers to the effect that the inclusion of certain objectionable hymns was due to the fact that they were "traditional" German, Austrian and Russian National songs (which we find in the Latin section under the text "Tantum Ergo") are included under this heading it is presumed. Because these melodies were formerly traditional national anthems of Germany, Austria and Russia, and may have been sung by our grandfathers and great-grandparents, we must perpetuate the tradition and allow our children to confuse such sentiments as "Germany Over All"! or "God Save Our Noble Czar"! or the text of the former National Austrian Hymn with the sacred text of "Tantum Ergo Sacramentum," to which these melodies are allied in this newly revised edition of St. Basil's Hymnal.

However, there is a greater question at issue in this matter and it resolves itself into this:

"Can we honestly expect to achieve results in the movement for the reform of church music in this or any other country if the children of the present and succeeding generations are to be fed on a hybrid type of 'opera-secular and street-song melody?'"

It is now generally admitted by all who have had to do with the promotion of the cause in this country that the chief obstacle to the introduction of the reform has been the attitude of those who formed a conception of church music in general from the standard given in St. Basil's and like hymnals. There is absolutely no hope of ever introducing the reform gradually (as stated by the editors of St. Basil's) through the medium of such tunes as given in this and other hymnals of similar character.

No conscientious educator who has the interests of his charges at heart will allow a text book to be put into the hands of the children which would serve to inculcate certain obviously wrong principles and false precepts. But why do educators permit the use of musical text books in the form of hymnals which certainly serve to develop a false notion of musical art?

Hybrid melodies which were originally conceived as vehicles for secular texts, love songs and ballads are surely "false" in an artistic sense when adopted as tunes for sacred texts (viz. Flow Gently, Sweet Afton! grafted to "O Purest of Creatures," etc., etc.). We permit children to sing these melodies to their adapted texts in their school days and it often occurs that in later years the adult learns that the original melodies were allied to texts totally at variance with the spirit of the devotional text. But what a confusion of ideas has resulted! and is it any wonder that we are continually hearing the lament that in certain localities nothing can be done toward introducing genuine church music or liturgical music

in the school or church because "They use such and such a hymnal and think that the new devotional music is too funereal or chant-like"!

This antagonism to the principles enunciated by Pope Pius X in his Motu Proprio can be directly traced to the use of unworthy hymnals (and there are many different types still in use throughout the country). One member of a community in the middle west wrote to a publisher recently inquiring whether he could send them a "Mass" that was lively and had a good deal of rhythm; they were preparing for a celebration and wanted to do something elaborate!

The reviewer regrets having taken up so much of your space, but he feels that the matter is not only a question of "Hymnals," but is of the opinion that the entire solution of the church music reform movement, according to the wishes of Pius X and Pope Benedict XV lies in the adoption of worthy hymnals in our schools and churches.

Yours very truly,

Oct., 1919.

M. COLAS.

## SPECIMENS OF SECULAR MELODIES FOUND IN CATHOLIC HYMNALS

*Adaptation* ←

Original Jesus the only thought of thee <sup>with</sup> sweetness fills my  
Drink To me on-ly with thine eyes and I will pledge with

Breast But Sweeter far it is to see and on Thy beauty feast No  
mine Or leave a kiss within the cup and I'll not ask for Wine; The

## Nina.

G. B. Pergolesi  
(1710-1736).

Andantino. Canzonetta.

Voice.

Tre gior - ni son che Ni - na, che Ni - na, che  
For - three long days my Ni - na, my Ni - na, my

Ni - na in let - to se ne sta, in let - to se ne  
Ni - na up - on her bed has lain, up - on her bed has

Pif - fa - ri, tim - pa - ni, cem - ba - li, sve - glia - te mia Ni - net - ta, sve -  
Loud - er and loud - er, ye play - ers all! A - wak - en my Ni - net - ta, a -

glia - te mia Ni - net - ta, ac - ciò non dor - ma più, ac -  
wak - en my Ni - net - ta, that she may sleep no more, that

ciò non dor - ma più, sve - glia - te mia Ni - net - ta, sve - glia - te mia Ni - net - ta, ac  
she may sleep no more, A - wak - en my Ni - net - ta, a - wak - en my Ni - net - ta, that

ciò non dor - ma più. ac - ciò non dor - ma più.  
she may sleep no more that she may sleep no more.

*a piacere*

THE VADE MEUM HYMNAL

A CATHOLIC SINGING-BOOK.

!!!

No. 46.

AVE VERUM.

Original Melody = "Nina"

PERGOLESE.

1 A - ve - ve - rum Cor - pus, na - tum De Ma - ri - a Vir - gi - ne, Ve - re  
2 Agnus latus per fo - ra - tum Unda fluxit et sanguine esto

1 pas - sum im - mo - la - tum In cru - ce pro ho - mi - ne.  
2 nobis praequ sta tum Mortis in ex - a - mine. O

Je - su, Je - su dul - cis, O Je - su, Je - su pi - e, O

Je - su, fi - li - i, Ma - ri - a, Tu no - bis mi - se - re - re. A - men.